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Achievements of the League of Nations in Its First Year

By CHARLES H. LEVERMORE, PH.D.

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SO many distinguished people in our country have assured us that the League of Nations is dead, scrapped, cast out, that thousands of our countrymen believe them. When I meet such people and say to them, "How can anything be either dead or even sleeping which has an administrative machinery covering the world, which represents forty-eight different states, receives and expends now an annual income of \$4,250,000, and owns its own home at Geneva, purchased for the price of 23,000£ sterling?", my interlocutor usually says, "Where do you get all that?" My belief is that the best remedy for such delusions as so many of our countrymen are laboring under is a statement of the facts.

THE SECRETARIAT

The first thing that the League of Nations did was to create a Secretariat. For this achievement, honor should be given primarily to the Secretary General, Sir James Eric Drummond. He was the responsible creator of this permanent staff, numbering now about two hundred people, many of them experts drawn from a score of different countries, experts in politics and law, diplomacy, finance, economics, journalism, sanitation and social questions. Sir James Eric Drummond was connected with the British Foreign Office as early as 1900. He was Parliamentary Secretary to Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey. He is a man of unusual experience and qualified to be a diplomat of the first rank. He receives at the present time a salary of about \$16,000. I notice that some American papers have given him a salary ranging from \$75,000 to \$120,000.

The Secretariat, gradually growing into a permanent staff, has been organized, within, into a half dozen departments for internal administration and organized for external duties, into ten great sections, covering such fields as are indicated by the following titles:

The Political Section, which conducts the correspondence with all Governments. Not only the correspondence of the League of Nations but also the correspondence with Governments for the International Labor Organization.

The Economics and Finance Section, which is busy with economic reconstruction.

The Administrative Commissions Section, whose work is largely with the great permanent Commissions.

The Registry Bureau for Treaties, which has now published about seventy treaties, and there are more to come.

The Mandates Section, a link with the Mandatory Commission.

The Legal Section, comprising expert authorities on international laws, the legal advisers of the Secretary-General and the Council.

The International Health and Social Questions Section, combatting disease, famine and vice.

I do not intend to try to enumerate them all but this gives an idea how the work is divided. Through all this mechanism the Secretariat is constantly at work gathering information about all the interests of the League, digesting it, arranging it for use, making reports, drawing up recommendations and programs for the Council and the Assembly, and keeping in constant touch with the Commissions and Bureaus and the officials of the League everywhere. It is, therefore, a sort of permanent ministry and administrative

staff of public welfare. Nothing like it has the world ever seen before.

Under the old Hague Conferences there was supposed to be a sort of Continuation Committee for the Hague Conferences, which consisted of the Council of Ambassadors at the Hague. They were absolutely without machinery which they could use for international purposes. Here in the Secretariat is the department of civil service for the world, which supplies the need which the ambassadors at the Hague never could meet.

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION

The second accomplishment of the League is the International Labor Organization. This started, as you know, in Washington. I would like to point out that the first Conference at Washington was the first world Congress since the war which voted to admit representatives of Germany, thereby indicating the sense of international unity which the delegates felt. The International Labor Organization is not under the Covenant. It is under the Treaty, but it is a part of the League of Nations just as much as the Secretariat, the Council and Assembly are, and it has an organization similar to that of the other division of the League of Nations. Its principal work has consisted in first preparing and then proposing what might be called an international labor code.

The Labor Organization has held three conferences. The result has been the submission of such an international labor code to the Governments in the League, covering proposals for the regulation of labor-time in various kinds of occupations on both land and sea, and including also proposals concerning the protection of laborers who are engaged in dangerous occupations, and proposals for the protection of

women and children who are at work. The Labor Organization also produces voluminous and valuable publications, and it maintains contact with national bureaus representing it in all the capitals of the important nations in the League. They have one even at Washington, although we are not in the League, and the head of it is Mr. Ernest Greenwood.

THE COUNCIL AND ITS WORK

The third achievement of the League of Nations is to be found in the work of the Council. While the Secretariat is the administrative staff, the Council is the executive committee. I might say it is a legislative executive committee of the world. It is always on the job through the Secretariat. In short summary, the Council has accomplished these things:

First, it has become the governing power for the Saar Valley, which it rules through its appointed Commission. The Saar Valley is a district inhabited by 650,000 people. The Council, representing the League of Nations, will be the governing power for the Saar Valley until 1935, when a plebiscite will be taken.

The Council is also the ultimate supervising and protecting power of the City of Danzig and its territory, in which 200,000 people live.

The Council is represented by the Chairman of the Greco-Bulgarian Inter-migration Commission, which is staving off possible wars in the Balkans, or has staved them off by directing the migration of the Nationals on either side of the Greco-Bulgarian frontier, so that they may live each under their own flag.

The Council has also prevented at least two wars. One has already been referred to—between Sweden and Finland. The final decision of a Commission, giving the sovereignty of the Aaland Islands to Finland was outlined in the papers recently. It is not yet finally recorded but undoubtedly it will be accepted. At any rate, it is now practically impossible that there should be

any war over the Aaland Islands question.

The Council has also checked and prevented hostilities between Lithuania and Poland; and, after a year's time, the parties are now contemplating settling finally their dispute by peaceful negotiation.

The Council through its agent, Dr. Nansen, has successfully completed the repatriation of about 300,000 war prisoners who were held in France and Poland, in Russia and in the Balkan states.

The Council has, with unanimity, admitted Switzerland to the League with drastic reservations, and it has purchased the home for the League to which I have alluded; but the greatest work of the Council, apart from its interference between disputants in possible warfare, has been its share in the creation of the great administrative commissions.

THE ASSEMBLY AND ITS WORK

The fourth great achievement of the League is in the work of the Assembly. As one of the speakers said, it might be stated in the fact that the Assembly *met*. The fact is that the Assembly met with forty-two states in its membership. The Hedjaz was a forty-third state, qualified to be a member of the League because it was a signatory to the Treaty, but the Hedjaz was not represented at Geneva and, as I understand it, is not now regarded as upon the roster of members. All the forty-two states were represented excepting Honduras. The Assembly added six more, including two of the former enemy states.

The Assembly is particularly remarkable as an achievement, in that it is the successor and continuator of the Hague Conferences, but under a somewhat different spirit and I believe under more favorable auspices. The first and second Hague Conferences met once in seven years casually upon invitation. Some of us will remember with what effort we were getting to work in 1913 and 1914 in order to induce our government or some other to

issue an invitation for a third meeting. The Hague Conferences came together as the results showed, chiefly to consider revisions of the laws of war. The men who were interested in those Hague Conferences would have regarded with admiration and gratification a congress of nations which would meet once every year presumably, and meet on the basis of a fundamental statute, a written constitution, with its work outlined for it by a staff of permanent experts acting in a Secretariat, and directed in their work by an executive committee of the whole world. It would have seemed to them an enormous step in advance if they could have summoned a Hague Conference under such conditions. We in our day do not realize, I fear, what we have already accomplished in the shape of world organization and how far it sets us ahead of the men of 1907 and 1908. The only question is, have we the spirit to use what we have?

When the Assembly met for the first time as a congress of nations acting under a written constitution, the first thing that it did was to declare its independence—its independence first of the Council, in that it would not accept a presiding officer who had been suggested from behind the scenes. It would elect that officer by ballot for itself. Its second act was to declare its independence of the Secretariat. It would not be bound by any bureaucratic restrictions concerning the credentials of delegates or the terms of application for admission. Then the Assembly contributed throughout its month of session the most valuable gift which that congress of nations could offer to the cause of an organized world. It practically resolved itself into a searchlight, a powerful searchlight of publicity, turning its rays upon everything that had been done by the Council and the Secretariat during the

year, and then in that light projecting what ought to be done in the future. In that action it was becoming the representative of the conscience of the world sitting in judgment. As the League of Nations is now organized, that is what the Assembly must do, and, so long as it retains the spirit that the first Assembly had, that it will do.

TWELVE GREAT COMMISSIONS

The fifth great accomplishment of the League of Nations is the creation of the important administrative Commissions. This is the work of both the Council and the Assembly, or I should say of the Council, the Secretariat and the Assembly. It would be very tedious to try to disentangle from the history of 1920 the organization and gradual development of character of these Commissions, or to assign the credit for their formation and work. Let me run over the list as I think of them, so that we may see by the rapid description what a wide range of activity the League of Nations already commands through these organs.

First, there was the Commission of Jurists, which drew up the plan for the Permanent Court of International Justice. This has been already sufficiently described.¹ The plan, of course, was radically modified and weakened in the Council, but let us remember that it was the Assembly, acting in the rôle of censor and critic, which added the protocol for the acceptance of compulsory jurisdiction by any state that wished to. The result is that thirty-three states have now approved of the plan for the Permanent Court, and, of that thirty-three, seven have signed the protocol for compulsory jurisdiction. That seems to me an encouraging sign. It should be remembered also in respect to this Permanent Court that the Assembly,

or the Commission and afterwards the Council and the Assembly, took one great step forward in accepting the plan for the appointment of judges. That proved to be an insuperable obstacle in 1907. It is now impossible, I take it, that we shall ever be bothered with that obstacle again, and the Court will undoubtedly be constituted next Fall.

Second is the Armaments Commission. This began with the Permanent Advisory Commission on Military, Air and Naval Questions, started by the Council last August, but it has been very greatly developed. It is now not only that Commission but it is also a Disarmament Commission. That Permanent Advisory Commission has become the nucleus for a great Disarmament Commission, so-called by the Council at its meeting in February. To that original Commission, which consisted, of course, of representatives of the military caste, there have been added six representative statesmen, political leaders of great eminence, headed by Viviani for France, Schanzer for Italy, Fisher for Great Britain, and so on; and six other persons chosen by the International Organization of Labor, three of whom are to represent especially the interests of capital and three the interests of labor; and four more, who are to be experts chosen by the Finance and Economics Commission. The importance of the subject given to this Commission justifies the great care with which it has been created and developed. The whole question of the reduction of armaments on both land and sea is what that Commission, as it at present stands, has been specifically instructed to study. The report which it presents to the Assembly next September ought to be an epoch-making document.

Third, there is the Economic Blockade Commission, known as the Block-

¹ See Page 1

ade Commission, whose duty it is to study how the economic weapons of the League ought to be used. That is, of course, a delicate question and will need to have most careful study. No blockade of the sort contemplated in the Covenant can become effective unless all the great commercial powers are willing to join in it; and I might have observed, in connection with the work of the Disarmament Commission, that its decision must necessarily lack full strength or even full possibility of application unless all of the great powers are willing to underwrite it. At present the United States is the chief exporter of arms.

Fourth comes the Communications and Transport Commission, its first duty being to see how, if possible, the vexatious restrictions upon the transit of passengers and of goods throughout Europe shall be lessened or removed. On these questions the Commission conducted, in March, a conference at Barcelona.

Fifth, the Finance and Economics Commission is the principal reconstructive agent of the League of Nations, since the economic reconstruction of Europe is necessarily the first step that must be taken. This Commission has sprung out of the financial conference that the Council ordered in February, 1920, and that was finally held at Brussels in September, but it has been hard at work through the year.

Perhaps its most significant fruit has been the creation of a sixth Commission called the International Credits Commission, which is to be a mediating agent between creditor nations and debtor nations. It is the plan of this latter Commission which the Finance Section of the central Commission has now proposed to apply to the bankrupt state of Austria. The plan is awaiting the approval of that Government.

Seventh is the International Health Organization, one of the first to get started, since the need was so great in the spring of 1920, especially in Poland and Austria. That Commission during its year or more of activity has drawn into its circle many of the health organizations of the world, including the Red Cross. The Red Cross has formed, within the League, an International League of Red Cross Societies. The Health Bureau promises to become the great sanitary agent of the League of Nations.

Eighth, is the Mandatory Commission, whose duty it is to receive the annual reports from the various mandated areas, submitted by the governments that have charge of those mandates. The work of this commission will eventually connect the League of Nations with some of the most dangerous questions relating to possible controversy and warfare. One of the members of the Mandatory Commission is a woman, Madam Anna Bugge-Wicksell, a representative of Sweden.

Ninth, is the Commission for Regulating the Opium and Drug Traffic. The opium conventions of 1910 to 1912 lost their status during the great war, so that the avenues for the traffic in noxious drugs were open during the war and after it. I am sorry to say that the traffic grew rapidly, being largely in the hands of British, American and Japanese dealers. It will be a duty of the League of Nations to revive the grip on that traffic to control it and restrain it. One of the experts at work with this commission is a woman and an American, Mrs. Hamilton Wright of Washington.

Tenth, is the Revision Committee, whose duty it is to consider amendments to the Covenant, and there are many amendments already under consideration. Some of them are of great importance, one relating to the Monroe

Doctrine, curiously enough offered by China; and the Canadian amendment to eliminate Article X from the Covenant. The Scandinavian nations offered long and elaborate amendments, establishing minute machinery for conciliation and arbitration under the Covenant.

Eleventh, is the Statistical Commission, which is a clearing house for many societies of statistical research and information.

Twelfth, and lastly, there is the Commission on the Deportation of Women and Children in Asia Minor. That commission consists of three persons; two of them are women. The man is Dr. Kennedy, who was named by the British High Commissioner at Constantinople. Of the two women, one, Madame Gaulis, is a French woman, appointed by the French Government. The other is an American, Miss Cushman, a native of New York State, who has been living for twenty years in Asia Minor and in Constantinople.

She went out there first to take charge of hospitals for the A. B. C. F. M. She has a very distinguished record in that service and is now at the head of the trachoma hospital for the Near East Relief in Constantinople. The League appointed her upon nomination by the presidents of Robert College and Constantinople College and the American Commissioner in Constantinople. In connection with this commission on the deportation of women and children it should be noted that a conference on the white slave traffic is to be held next June at Geneva. The white slave traffic is said to have revived during and after the war, because the conventions of 1904 and 1910 had fallen into abeyance.

Such is a hasty review of what the League of Nations, in its first year of organization, has done. I submit that since the infant Hercules in his cradle strangled the serpent, no baby a year old has shown more power or accomplished more.

Two Accomplishments of the Existing League—the Secretariat and the Assembly

By SARAH WAMBAUGH

Recently a temporary Member of the Administrative Commission Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations

THE first year of the League of Nations has been one of perplexing questions. Opinions may differ as to its success in dealing with those questions. The promise of the League does not, however, depend solely on the value of its initial achievements; nor yet is it of fatal consequence that the League has had some initial failures.

The greatest accomplishment of the League of Nations is that it exists, that the Council, the Assembly, and the Secretariat are actually at work; that, in fact, the world has at last a fixed

central office ready to look after its business, under the direction of a central committee and subject to the criticism of the stockholders at an annual meeting. Everybody's business has ceased to be nobody's business. The achievement is incalculable.

Let us consider the significance of being able to say that an assembly of representatives of states having jurisdiction over seventy-five per cent of the people of the earth has already held the first of its annual meetings; that the Council of the League has